

“Based on a detailed investigation of all the facts and supported by the testimony of the surviving Japanese leaders involved, it is the Survey’s opinion that certainly prior to 31 December 1945, and in all probability prior to 1 November 1945, Japan would have surrendered even if the atomic bombs had not been dropped, even if Russia had not entered the war, and even if no invasion had been planned or contemplated.”

US Strategic Bombing Survey, *Japan’s Struggle to End the War* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1946), 13.

“Contrary to the conclusions in the [US Strategic] Bombing Survey’s two major 1946 reports, for example, Prince Konoe Fumimaro had stated in his postwar interrogation with the Survey that the war would probably have gone on throughout 1945 if the atomic bomb had not been dropped on Japan. In his own postwar interrogation, Premier Suzuki had also indicated that the atomic bombing made an important difference in ending the war, and only after some coaxing by Survey questioners had Privy Seal Kido Koichi given the testimony suggesting that the atomic bomb was unnecessary.”

Barton J. Bernstein, “Introducing the Interpretive Problems of Japan’s 1945 Surrender,” 30.

“[T]he atomic bombs and the Soviet entry into the war are, in a sense, gifts from the gods. This way we don’t have to say that we quit the war because of domestic circumstances.”

Japanese Navy Minister Yonai Mitsumasa to Admiral Takagi Sokichi, August 12, 1945.

“His Majesty the Emperor is greatly concerned over the daily increasing calamities and sacrifices faced by the citizens of the various belligerent countries in this present war, and it is His Majesty’s heart’s desire to see the swift termination of the war. In the Greater East Asia War, however, as long as America and England insist on unconditional surrender, our country has no alternative but to see it through in an all-out effort for the sake of survival and the honor of the homeland.”

Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs Shigenori Togo to Japanese Ambassador to the Soviet Union Naotake Sato, July 12, 1945; intercepted and decoded by the United States on July 13 and shared with top officials, including President Harry S. Truman.

“[Stalin]’ll be in the Jap War on August 15th. Fini Japs when that comes about.”

President Harry S. Truman, diary entry, July 17, 1945.

“[The atomic bomb] saved hundreds of thousands of casualties on the beaches of Japan. It was also delivered on time so that there was no necessity for any concessions to Russia at the end of the war. It was on time in the sense that after the war we had the principal deterrent that prevented Russia from sweeping over Europe after we demobilized. It is one of the most magnificent performances of history in any development to have that thing on time.”

Vannevar Bush, wartime director of the Office of Scientific Research and Development, quoted in US Atomic Energy Commission, *In the Matter of J. Robert Oppenheimer: Transcript of Hearing Before Personnel Security Board, Washington, D.C., April 12, 1954 through May 6, 1954* (Government Printing Office, 1954; reprinted by MIT Press, 1971), 561.

“Those insisting that Japan’s surrender could have been procured without recourse to atomic bombs cannot point to any credible supporting evidence from the eight men who effectively controlled Japan’s destiny: the six members of the Supreme Council for the Direction of the War, the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal Kido, and the Emperor. Not only has no relevant document been recovered from the wartime period, but none of them, even as they faced potential death sentences in war-crimes trials, testified that Japan would have surrendered earlier upon an offer of modified terms, coupled to Soviet intervention or some other combination of events, excluding the use of atomic bombs.”

Richard B. Frank, *Downfall: The End of the Imperial Japanese Empire* (New York: Random House, 1999), 343.

“In a careful analysis of Japanese records between August 6 and August 17, the historian Tsuyoshi Hasegawa found only two statements (out of twelve) referring to the impact of the bombs alone; the rest emphasized both the bombs and Soviet entry, or Soviet action alone. In Hasegawa’s own estimation, the Soviet entry rather than atomic bombs was the determining factor forcing Japan’s hand.”

John W. Dower, *Cultures of War: Pearl Harbor, Hiroshima, 9–11, Iraq* (New York: W.W. Norton/The New Press, 2010), 243.

“Would you favor or oppose using poison gas against the Japanese if doing so would reduce the number of American soldiers who are killed and wounded?”

Favor 40%
Oppose 49%
No opinion 11%

“A majority of young people favor the use of poison gas, while persons 50 years and older are substantially opposed to the idea. Men oppose the idea of using gas to a greater extent than women, and college-trained people are more opposed than people with no more than an elementary school education.”

“We believe that these considerations make the use of nuclear bombs for an early unannounced attack against Japan inadvisable. If the United States were to be the first to release this new means of indiscriminate destruction upon mankind, she would sacrifice public support throughout the world, precipitate the race for armaments, and prejudice the possibility of reaching an international agreement on the future control of such weapons.

“Much more favorable conditions for the eventual achievement of such an agreement could be created if nuclear bombs were first revealed to the world by a demonstration in an appropriately selected uninhabited area.”

The Franck Report, submitted to Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson, June 11, 1945, by James Franck and six other Manhattan Project scientists tasked with examining the bomb's social and political implications.

“The opinions of our scientific colleagues on the initial use of these weapons are not unanimous: they range from the proposal of a purely technical demonstration to that of the military application best designed to induce surrender...We find ourselves closer to these latter views; we can propose no technical demonstration likely to bring an end to the war; we see no acceptable alternative to direct military use.”

“Recommendations on the Immediate Use of Nuclear Arms,” June 16, 1945, submitted by Robert Oppenheimer and four other Manhattan Project scientists to the Interim Committee, which advised President Truman on atomic weapons.

“The record of General MacArthur's operation from 1 March 1944 through 1 May 1945 shows 13,742 US killed compared to 320,165 Japanese killed, or a ratio of 22:1.

“There is reason to believe that the first 30 days in Kyushu should not exceed the price we have paid for Luzon [31,000 killed, wounded, or missing].”

Statement of General George C. Marshall to meeting of President Harry S. Truman, Secretary of War Henry Stimson, Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal, John J. McCloy, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, June 18, 1945.

“By August 2, [1945] the [Military Intelligence Service] reported three Japanese armies, eleven divisions, one brigade and one regiment on Kyushu. Total estimated Japanese strength stood at 545,000, including 445,000 ground-combat troops... By August 10, the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) of the Joint Chiefs of Staff estimated that by October 15, the Home Islands would house fifty-six field divisions (including three armored), fourteen depot divisions, and army troops with a combined strength of 2.6 million men. Of these Kyushu would be packed with 600,000 men in thirteen field divisions. In the final revision of this estimate on August 20, the total on Kyushu reached 625,000 men and fourteen field divisions. (This total was exactly correct as to field divisions, but the actual number of Japanese servicemen on Kyushu was much greater: 900,000.) At least nine of these divisions were in southern Kyushu, triple the original estimate, and the aggregate total of defenders far exceeded the 350,000 figure Marshall provided to Truman on June 18.”

Richard B. Frank, *Downfall: The End of the Imperial Japanese Empire* (New York: Random House, 1999), 202–203.

“General Marshall told me that it might cost half a million American lives to force the enemy’s surrender on his home grounds.”

Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs* (1955).

“We estimated that the major fighting would not end until the latter part of 1946 at the earliest. I was informed that such operations might be expected to cost over a million casualties, to the American forces alone.”

Former Secretary of War Henry Stimson, “The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb,” *Harper’s*, February 1947.

“Anybody who really understands the history of that period has to conclude that it saved lives overall. Now, if you were living within the city of Hiroshima or the city of Nagasaki at that particular time, it is tough for you to accept that you gave your life or your father’s life or your parent’s life or whatever for the good of your country. But that’s what every soldier was doing—out fighting it—whether he was killed by a rifle bullet or an atomic blast. ...There were a lot of people killed there, but they were killed for the overall good because many, many, many thousands of additional people would have been killed. Most of them would have been Japanese. And I’m not even talking in the event of an invasion.”

Interview with *Enola Gay* navigator Dutch Van Kirk, 2008, The National WWII Museum, OH.2672.

“The decisions made by Truman and his subordinates to add nuclear weapons to the campaign of blockade and bombardment cost the lives of between 100,000 and 200,000 Japanese at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, on top of the many tens of thousands of others who died in the incendiary raids or due to the ultimate effects of the blockade. Those Japanese noncombatants, however, held no stronger right not to be slaughtered than did the vast numbers of Chinese and other Asian noncombatants, the Japanese noncombatants (not to mention Allied prisoners of war and civilian internees) who would have perished of starvation and disease in the final agony of the blockade. Thus, alternatives to the atomic bombs carried no guarantee that they would end the war or reduce the amount of human death and suffering.”

Richard B. Frank, *Downfall: The End of the Imperial Japanese Empire* (New York: Random House, 1999), 360.

“Yet a very rough calculation suggests—given the soft data, no stronger verb than ‘suggest’ is acceptable—that a late August surrender, if achieved without the atomic bombings but with continued conventional bombings and the blockade, as well as the struggle on the Asian mainland and massive problems of malnutrition, might well have saved lives overall. In contrast, it seems quite likely that a very late October surrender, without the atomic bombings but with the conventional bombings and the blockade, as well as the struggle on the Asian mainland and massive problems of malnutrition, would have cost more lives, even if only Asian and not American and Soviet lives are counted.

Barton Bernstein, “Introducing the Interpretive Problems of Japan’s 1945 Surrender,” 15.

“The technical development of implements of violence has now reached the point where no political goal could conceivably correspond to their destructive potential or justify their actual use in armed conflict.”

Hannah Arendt, “Reflections on Violence,” *New York Review of Books*, February 27, 1969.

“...Following are our terms. We will not deviate from them. There are no alternatives. We shall brook no delay...We call upon the government of Japan to proclaim now the unconditional surrender of all Japanese armed forces, and to provide proper and adequate assurances of their good faith in such action. The alternative for Japan is prompt and utter destruction.”

Potsdam Declaration Calling for the Surrender of Japan, Approved by the Heads of Government of the United States, China, and Great Britain, July 26, 1945.

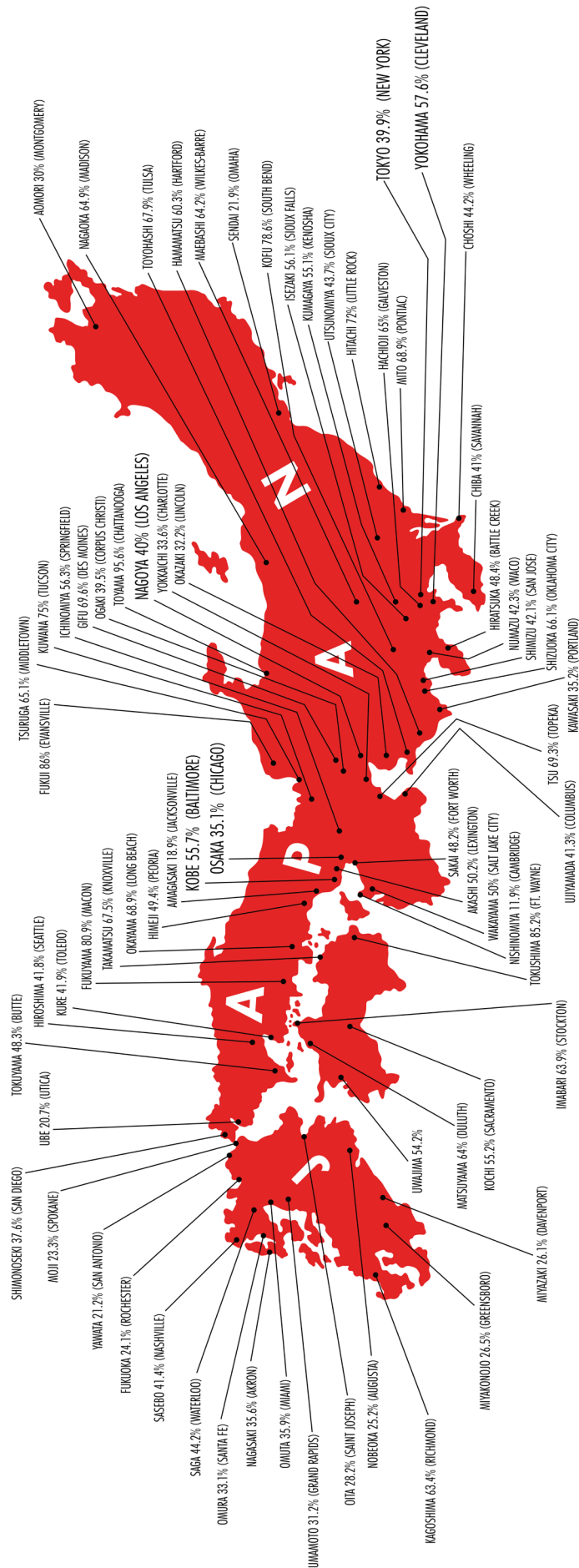
“I dwelt upon the tremendous cost in American life and to a smaller extent in British life if we enforced ‘unconditional surrender’ upon the Japanese. It was for [President Truman] to consider whether this might not be expressed in some other way, so that we got all the essentials for future peace and security, and yet left them some show of saving their military honour and some assurance of their national existence, after they had complied with all safeguards necessary for the conqueror. The President replied bitterly that he did not think the Japanese had any military honour after Pearl Harbour. I contented myself with saying that at any rate they had something for which they were ready to face certain death in very large numbers, and this might not be so important to us as it was to them. He then became quite sympathetic, and spoke, as had [US Secretary of War] Stimson, of the terrible responsibilities that rested upon him for the unlimited effusion of American blood.”

Winston Churchill, recounting his July 18, 1945, meeting with President Harry S. Truman in *Triumph and Tragedy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1953), 642.



Osaka, Japan, following American firebombing, June 1, 1945.

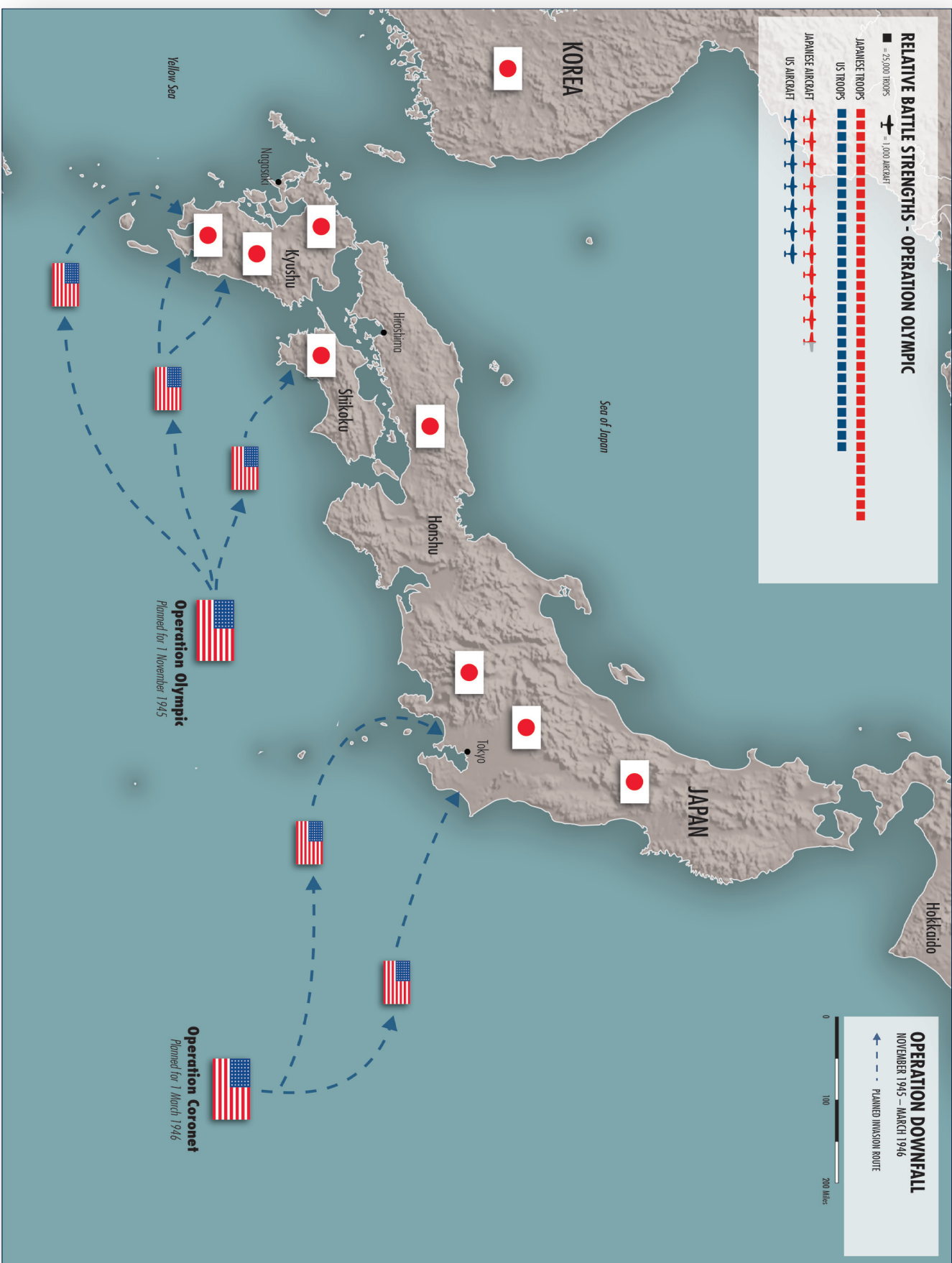
(Image: National Archives and Records Administration, 342-FH-3A-3773.)



This map of Japan shows the principal industrial cities which were burned out by B-29 incendiary attacks. Figures indicate what percent of the city was destroyed. For comparison, each city is paired with a US city of approximately the same size.

This map, produced after the war, shows the extent of the damage inflicted upon Japanese cities as a result of US B-29 firebomb attacks. For comparison, each Japanese city is paired with a US city of approximately the same size.

(Image: Office of War Information.)



As the United States prepared for Operation Downfall, the largest amphibious operation ever planned, Japan initiated a massive troop buildup to defend its home islands. (Image: The National WWII Museum.)